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THE MODERN HOUSE—ITS DECORATION AND FURNITURE.—VI.

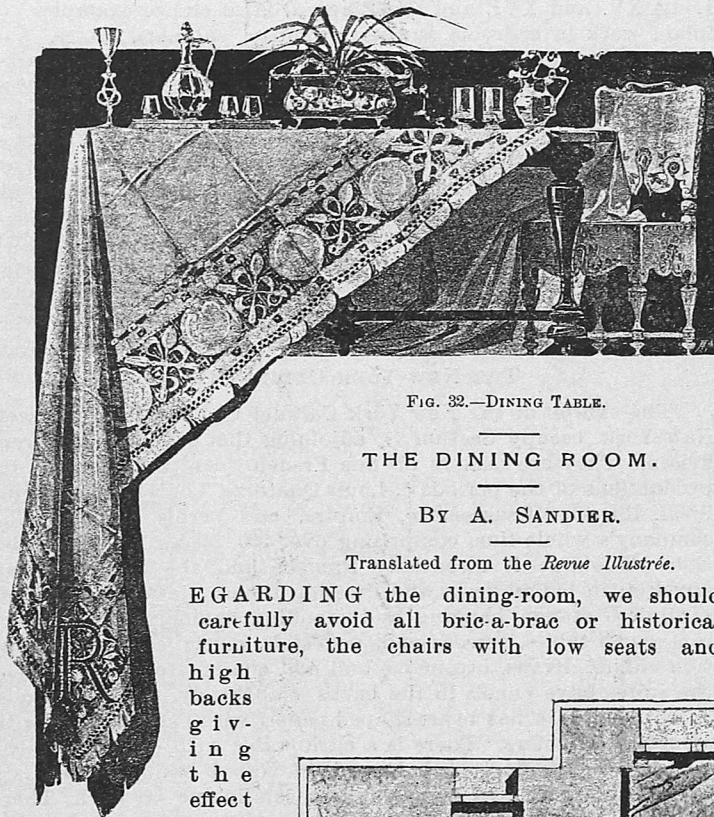


FIG. 32.—DINING TABLE.

THE DINING ROOM.

BY A. SANDIER.

Translated from the *Revue Illustrée*.

REGARDING the dining-room, we should carefully avoid all bric-a-brac or historical furniture, the chairs with low seats and high backs giving the effect of one

listening to morning prayers, and tapestry with a green ground, which has the double inconvenience of being too common and of rendering the apartment dark.

Let us avoid stained glass in the windows which furnish the sun and light for the room. Never employ colored glass save for framing an opening or for transforming it into a luminous picture if the view on which it opens should be concealed. The dining-room should be, above all, light, cheerful and inviting.

Brillat-Savarin—to whom one may always turn if speaking of the accessories of the table as an artist—Brillat-Savarin says that it is impossible to really breakfast or dine with more than eight at table. Ten or twelve persons are sure to divide themselves into two groups of talkers, and then farewell to the unity of impression. Beyond this number comes the chaos of a State dinner with an utter negation of all the cuisine and of all conversation.

If you are condemned to State dinners, disregard the foregoing and arrange your dining-room with splendor. Adopt the style of Louis XVI., and abandon with it

the pleasing anticipation of a conversation both refreshing and stimulating, carried on among friends without effort or ceremony between plain but skilfully prepared dishes, and accompanied by a few bottles of known vintage. Such a pleasure demands a room the dimensions of which warrant intimacy and the arrangement of which contributes toward producing that condition of the mind in which the feast will be one of the intellect and of the body at the same time.

Your dining-room should therefore be small, well lighted, cheerful to the eye, with light decoration, favorable to the expansion of the human being in every way.

A dining-room, wainscoted and covered throughout with woodwork, if daintily carved, will be rich and even original, but will never prove cheerful to the eye and pleasing to the fancy. Here, more than elsewhere, is needed a lively style of decoration, to which you may give, according to preference, an allegorical or a realistic character. Landscapes and scenes of the chase are the most general *motifs* in the decoration of the dining-room. It is possible to produce new and charming effects or to have the most tiresome repetitions in the world according to the talent of the painter—note this well—by carrying out a scheme of paintings. In his mythological and classical painting—"The Chase of Diana,"* which is at the same time a hunting scene, Makart has made a work which, save for some debatable features, in the general movement of the composition, the brilliance of the details, the disposition of the forms, the piquancy and modernism of the nymphs, is highly interesting as a decoration, and which adjusts itself to the panels of a dining-room as its

natural frame for the entertainment of the eye and of the imagination. We would propose the same general reflections as to the hangings. The ordinary tapestry with its ramifications of green branches, its heraldic figures with Gothic sentences issuing from their mouths, would be almost chilling in a dining-room of the present. But the tapestries with delicate pleasing colors on a background of white with a silvery sheen, with fanciful landscapes which were presented to us by the art of the tapestry makers of the last century, would be a most happy decoration, an appropriate frame for which is formed by the table, glittering with white folds of beautiful damask linen and with rays of the sunlight reflected from the angles or rounded surfaces of the glass-ware.

The colors which we avoid in the window glass so as to allow the passage of the sunlight which contains them all, are introduced by the mistress upon the table with combinations, of metal of the *épergnes* and the handles of knives and forks, the ruby of the liqueur glasses, the rosy tints, the bluish green, the iridescence and opalescence of the

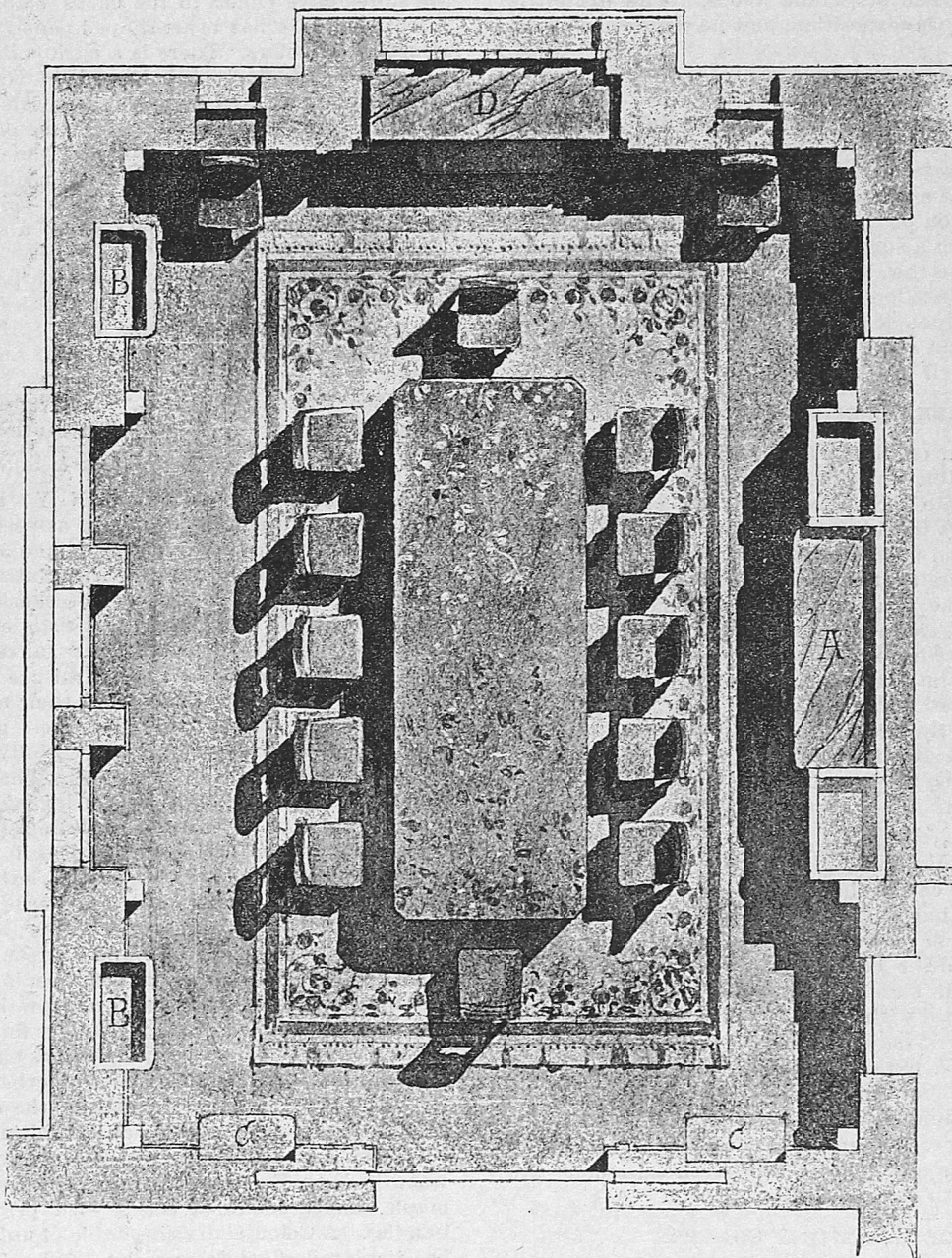


FIG. 33.—DECORATIVE CHART FOR FLOOR OF DINING-ROOM. STYLE—JAPANESE RENAISSANCE.

* This celebrated painting may be seen in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in Central Park, in this city.—Ed.

THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

Venetian glass which, furnishing to hand the chalices of flowers and fanciful animal shapes, carry to completion the fantasies which the brush of the decorator set in motion on the walls.

To the adherents of a style entirely modern and realistic, and not reminiscent of any style other than itself, the forms and creatures of the water, the earth and the air which furnish us nourishment, are able to supply a thousand *motifs* as old as Nature itself, and like Nature, always new. In this system the dado is reserved for the inhabitants of the water, the middle portion of the wall for the beasts and plants of the earth, while the frieze is devoted to the birds.

We endeavor to give to all these creatures an appearance of life by an accurate portrayal of their movements and forms, and the lightness and delicacy of

modeling, but not by the aid of perspective, since our walls should be allowed to present their natural appearance, that of a flat surface.

In order to preserve as much space as possible in the apartment for facilitating the service we provide in the masonry that the buffet should be at A, in Fig. 33, and reserve in the wall, at the place it will occupy, a niche ten inches in depth in which to put it. We do the same for the cupboards, B, and the *étagères*, C. The chimney, D, is also placed in a recess so as not to project into the apartment. The floor should be in mosaic, and if you are enamored of the decorative art of the Romans (those of Pompeii, not those of the Institute), you may enliven the surface by having on it tracings of the debris such

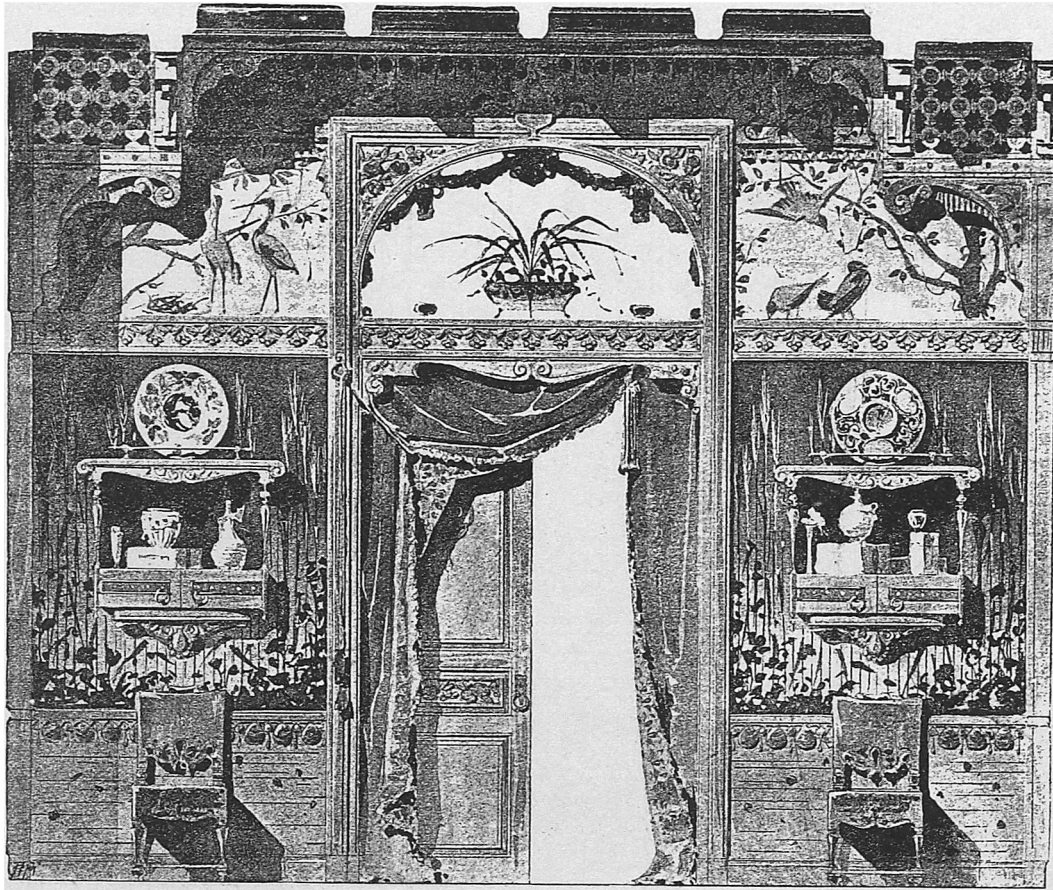


FIG. 34.—DECORATIVE CHART FOR END OF DINING-ROOM, NEXT DRAWING-ROOM. STYLE—JAPANESE RENAISSANCE.

as falls from your table: the bones of fowls, shell fish, raisin

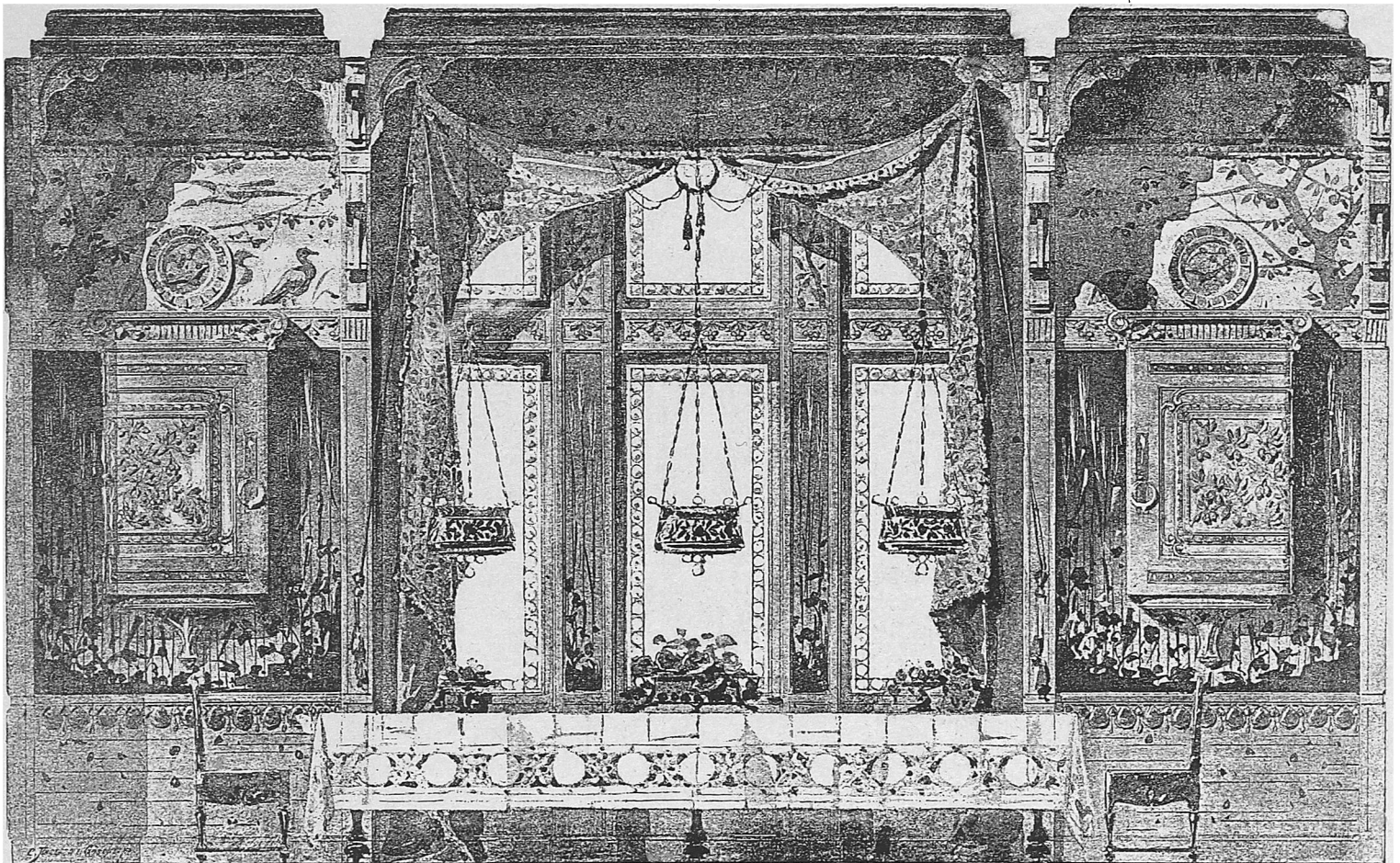


FIG. 35.—DECORATIVE CHART FOR SIDE OF DINING-ROOM, OPPOSITE GARDEN. STYLE—JAPANESE RENAISSANCE.

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seeds, branches of celery, bunches of cherries, etc. We cover the center of the apartment with a movable carpet on which is placed the table and the chairs.

The table, being always concealed either with the table-cloth or with a tapestry cover, should be very plain, without the least carving; the chairs in natural leather or figured only in those portions which are not touched by the clothing.

As the head-piece of the previous chapter we showed the table, a chair, and illustrated a design for a border for the table-cloth in circles and crosses composed of plates, knives and forks. See Fig. 32.

Fig. 34, showing the end of dining-room toward the garden exhibits the large recess in which the chimney is ensconced. It is made of marble slabs. The frame of the chimney-piece, outlined by mould-

ings and corner-pieces in bronze, is decorated with roses and shells, in faience, embedded in a mosaic of gold. The back

of the recess is occupied by a window in which, by the aid of a mosaic of glass, we render the rich colors of a peacock with outspread tail. In the lower part and in the two small windows on either side are vases containing the forms of rotund fruit.

In borrowing the colors of our models selected from an earlier age, we have not followed the processes which gave to their stained glass such perfect harmony. The tones were obtained by a mixture of the colors; the emerald, for instance, by superposing a layer of greenish yellow over one of greenish blue. "If," says Miehiet, "we would understand and reproduce this old stained glass, we may learn a lesson from the enamel of the

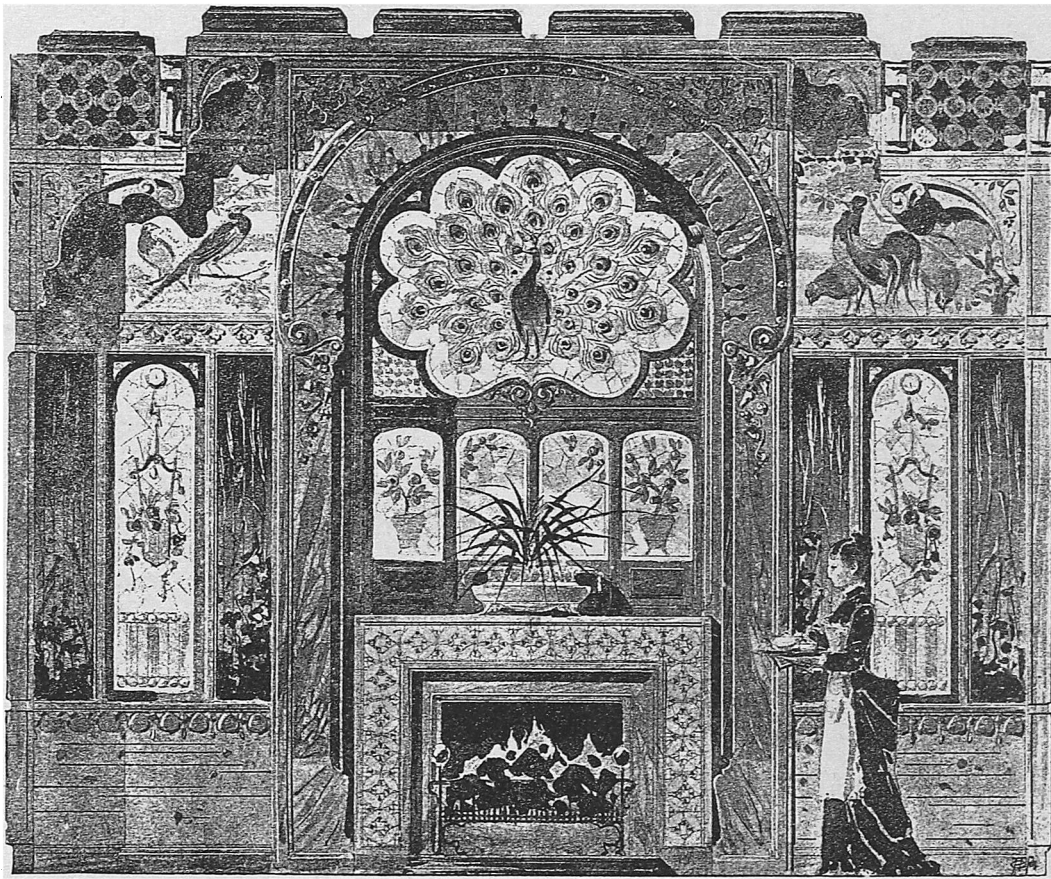


FIG. 36.—DECORATIVE CHART FOR END OF DINING-ROOM, OPPOSITE GARDEN. STYLE—JAPANESE RENAISSANCE.

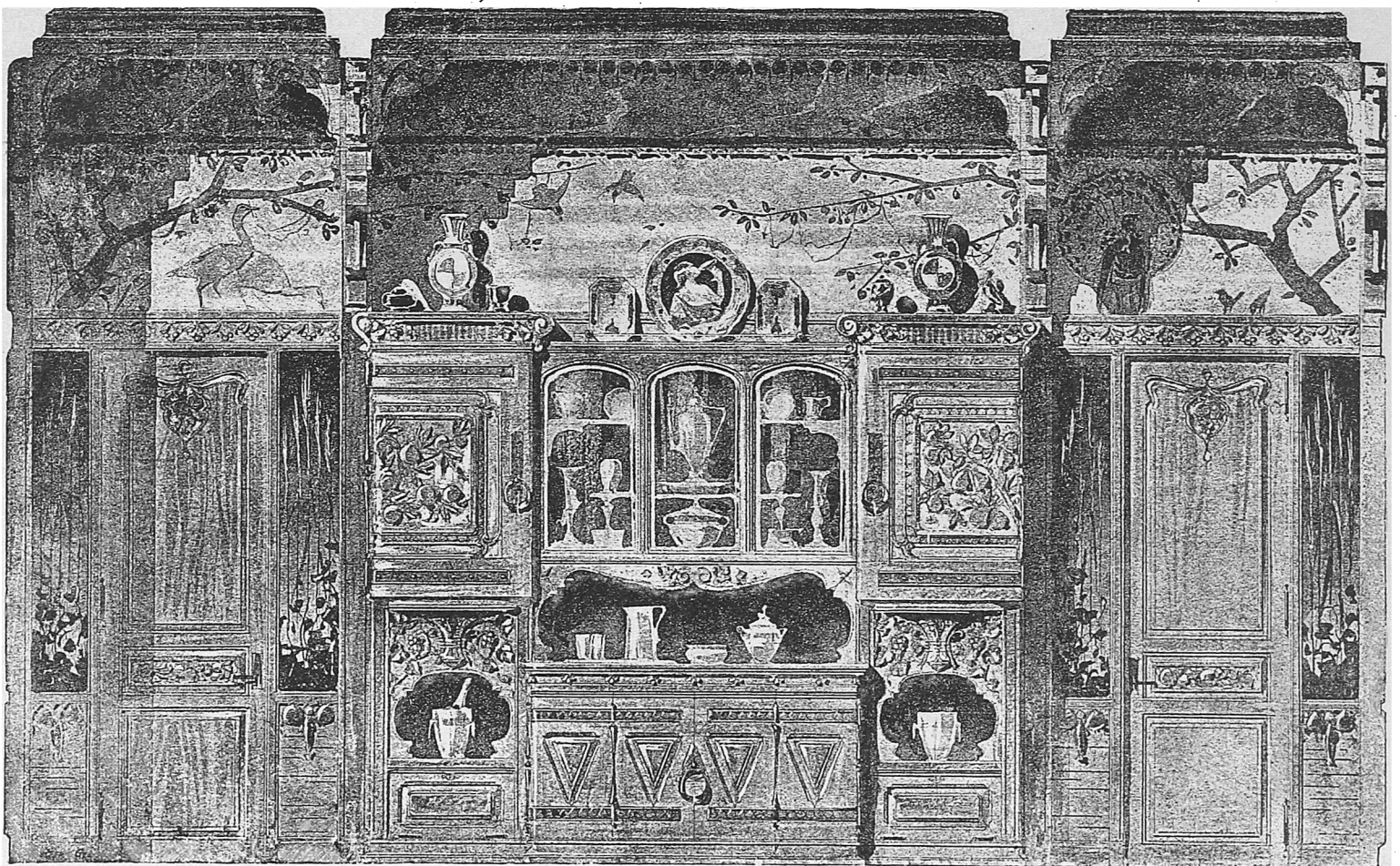


FIG. 37.—DECORATIVE CHART FOR SIDE OF DINING-ROOM, OPPOSITE VESTIBULE. STYLE—JAPANESE RENAISSANCE.

Scarabeus. The stained glass of the thirteenth century is double, as may be seen at Bourges, and particularly at the museum in Paris. The light, that is retarded, and does not pass through the glass, gives the magical effect of precious stones. They are like the wings of insects, composed of many scales, between which under the microscope, you see extending a network of mysterious character."

The mural decoration of this wall is the same as that for the three other sides, and is composed of a base or dado of sanded ground decorated with various carnation colored shell fish, and marine flowers, nacreous polyps, such submarine plants as are red or of a rosy color like coral, and others of a beautiful yellowish or golden green. The wall panels of the apartment suggest the idea of a field of grain, the spikes being arranged symmetrically with red corn poppies breaking the perpendicular lines of the stems bearing the grain. On the frieze we paint birds, not confining ourselves to those which appear on our table, but rather giving the preference to those showing the greatest variety of movements in their flight and the greatest brilliancy of coloring in their plumage. The frieze is separated from the middle wall space by a band of bunches of cherries, while that of the dado has a border of shells and crawfish.

If we wish to have our decoration done cheaply, it may be accomplished by recourse to colored or figured paper. This is, however, very hazardous, as our wall-paper manufacturers are still behind in their ideas of decoration. They adhere to the old models, and, under the guise of novelties, present us with mere reproductions of ancient embroideries mechanically executed. They are wonderful, but they are destitute of imagination. The diminution of the exportation of this article, as well as others, from Paris, has been explained by accusing foreigners of appropriating our designs. This may have been true twenty years ago, but since that time the English, and above all, the Americans, have done much in the way of endeavors to invent new styles of ornamentation. These they have found, and to-day they look down upon our antiquated styles.

The great success of French fashions is due to the fact that the invention of those who set them is never at a rest, creating and recreating new styles each year. Foreigners constantly follow. Would that those engaged in the decoration of our houses would expend as much effort in their work as do our tailors and dressmakers. If this were the case we could not do less than follow the French movement which has given to each generation a more or less attractive style—one with a characteristic personality. While other nations copied the style of the Regency, we had taken up that of Louis XV.; when they

took up the Louis XV., the style of Louis XVI. flourished with us. It is our turn now to prove our originality and rescue decorative architecture from its torpor and the spirit of imitation pure and simple, if we would retain the first rank in our future expositions.

The wall against which the buffet is placed (Fig. 35) is pierced with two doors, the one opening into the butler's office, the other into the vestibule. The chart explains the disposition of the buffet. Below in the middle is a projection surmounted by a niche and covered with marble, forms a table on which a number of things may be placed. Above is a large glass case with three doors, which contains the handsomest pieces of china and silverware. On each side are two cupboards, the doors of which are decorated with branches of peaches and pears, treated

in very low relief, while under these cupboards are two small niches and two drawers. This buffet, like all the furniture of this room, is made of walnut in its natural color.

The illustration of the side toward the garden (Fig. 37) shows the large window glazed with clear glass, with a border of colored panes. A curtain of cloth, either plain or decorated in harmony with the room, acts as a shade. At the head of this is placed a band of the same stuff decorated with embroideries. On each side of this window are two cupboards corresponding in style to those of the buffet, the door of one being decorated with a branch of cherries, the other with a branch of plums.

In the view of the toward the salon (Fig. 38), we see the door opening into the salon with the semi-circular space above left open; to the right and the left are two *étagères*.

The ceiling (Fig. 39), is supported by eight large consoles which are shown in profile in the other designs. The caissons between these consoles are of wood, though their relief carving may be of papier-maché. Between the joists are painted two apple branches in

blossoms growing behind a geometric design.

(To be continued.)

HERE IS an idea for a small withdrawing room or boudoir: Tint the walls with soft china pink, and tone them down with lace hangings. Nottingham curtain stuff looks exceedingly well and, as we all know, is not expensive. After tacking them on the wall finish the top with a flounce about fifteen or sixteen inches in length. By dividing a curtain you will get the finished edge for the bottom of your flounce. The pink thus covered becomes very delicate, and forms a beautiful background for water-color drawings. The whole room should be kept as delicate as possible with softly-tinted china as a decoration.

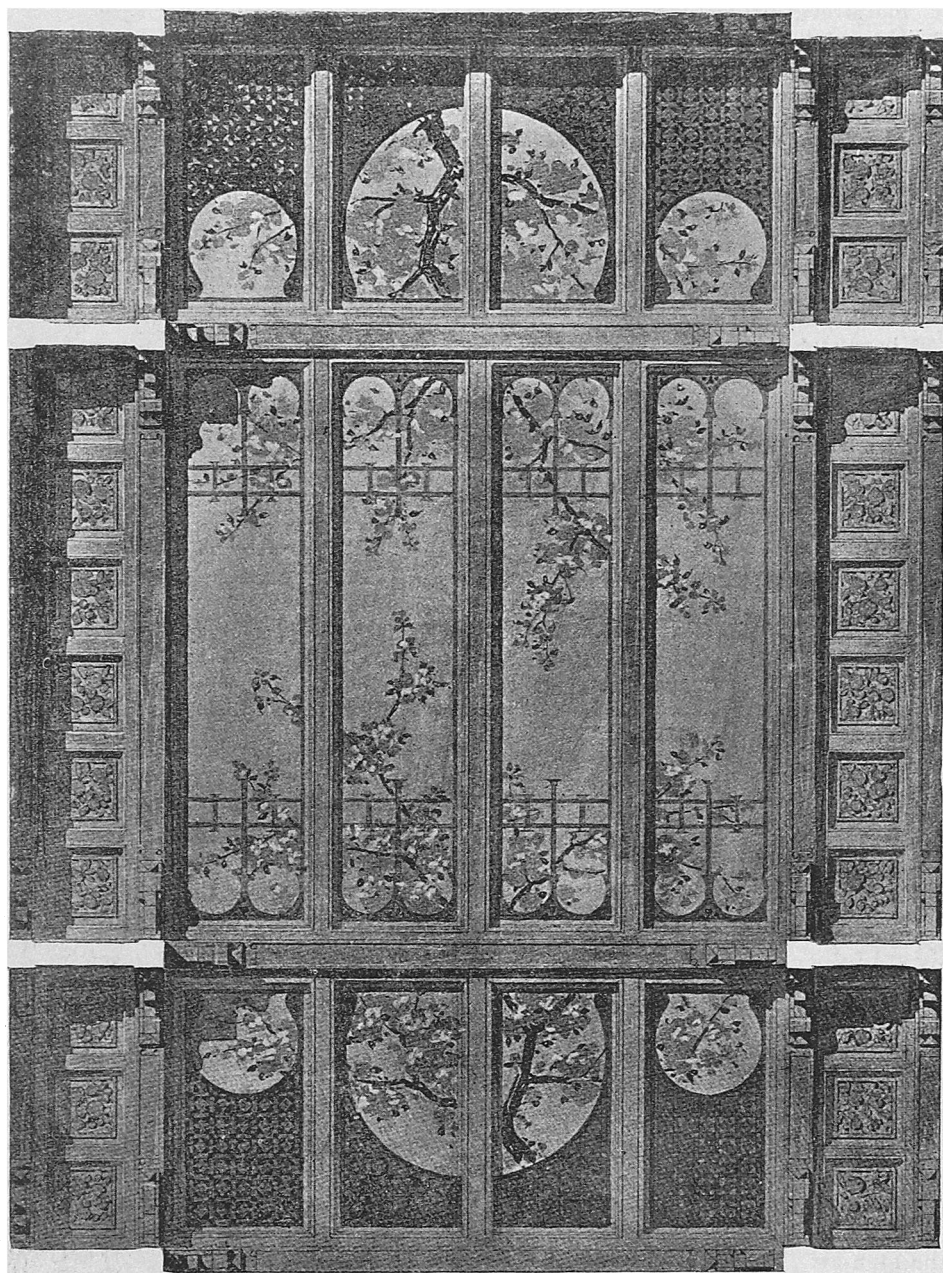


FIG. 38.—DECORATIVE CHART FOR CEILING OF DINING-ROOM. STYLE—JAPANESE RENAISSANCE.